

Paper : M111 (C):
PRINT AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES AND LITERATURE
IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIT III: INFORMATION SOURCES AND
EVALUATION

Topic: EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC
RESOURCES

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Electronic resources

:Definition

- ⦿ An electronic resource is defined as a resource which requires computer access or any electronic product that delivers a collection of data, be it text referring to full text databases, electronic journals, image collections, other multimedia products, as a commercially available title that has been published with an aim to being marketed. These may be delivered on CD ROM, on tape, via internet and so on.

Examples of E-resources

- Electronic journals (e-journal)
- Electronic books (e-book)
- E–Thesis and dissertation
- E– Reference book
- E– Newspaper
- Online databases in varied digital formats, Adobe Acrobat documents (pdf), WebPages , html, etc. and more.

Evaluating E-resources

- Purpose
- Authority
- Accuracy
- Objectivity
- Currency
- Coverage/Scope
- Accessibility
- Cost
- Customer Relations and Support

Contd....

- ⦿ Publicity and Promotions
- ⦿ Continuous Assessment

Purpose

- ① ✓ Know exactly what information is relevant to your research question: facts, opinions, statistics, background, etc.
- ① ✓ Test the resources located against your purpose.

Authority

- ✓ Who wrote this document?
- ✓ Is the publisher reputable?
- ✓ Who can be contacted for more information?
- ✓ Is the author qualified to write this?
- ✓ Is the material copyrighted?

Accuracy

- ✓ Is the information timely?
- ✓ Is the information error free (grammar, spelling)?
- ✓ Is the information sufficiently detailed and comprehensive for the stated purpose of the research?
- ✓ Is the information one-sided?
- ✓ Is the information supported by citations to other sources?
- ✓ Is the information organized for easy reading (charts, graphs, etc.)?

Objectivity

- ✓ Is the information biased?
- ✓ Does it acknowledge the other side's arguments?
- ✓ Is it intended to sway the audience?
- ✓ Is advertising on the page clearly related to the content presented?

Currency

- ① ✓ When was the material last updated?
- ② ✓ Is it a work in progress?
- ③ ✓ Are cited sources up to date?
- ④ ✓ Are previous editions acknowledged and possibly made available for comparison?
- ⑤ What is the time period covered in this resource?
- ⑥ How many years of data are in the database?

Coverage

- Areas/Subject covered?
- Is it in depth?
- What is the stated subject coverage for the resource?
- How many subjects are covered by the resource?
- Is this resource the authoritative file in its discipline?
- Are the titles covered appropriate for the subject area?
- Are the titles considered well respected and of high utility in the stated area of coverage?

Accessibility

- Is the information Accessible?
- Can it be downloaded?

- Interfaces
- Is searching easy for average users?
- Are there both novice and expert search interfaces available?
- Does the interface have introductory screens?
- Does the interface have online tutorials?
- Does the interface have prompts and menus?
- Does the interface have function specific help?
- Is it easy to move from one function to another?
- Is it easy for a user to access full-text from the citation?
- Are error messages easy to understand?
- Is there an easy and obvious way to logoff or exit out of the system?

- Structures
- Is Boolean searching available?
- Is keyword searching available?
- Is full text searching available?

Cost

- ⦿ What is the pricing structure of the product?
- ⦿ How are the costs determined?
- ⦿ Are costs part of a subscription package?
- ⦿ Is there a pricing differential for electronic sources if the library also subscribes to the printed source?
- ⦿ Are costs based on number of users served?
- ⦿ Are costs based on the number of uses of the product?
- ⦿ Are costs based on the number of ports available to the users?
- ⦿ Are costs reduced by aggregation? (consortia vs. university-wide vs. campus)



Customer Relations and Support

- Can the users suggest changes?
- Is there a publisher newsletter to make users aware of changes?
- Does the vendor support a listserv?
- Is customer support available during the hours the library is open?
- Does the vendor/producer/publisher offer sufficient backup for the product?
- When you call for information or to report a problem, how long does it take 1) to get an initial response? 2) to get the problem resolved?
- Is customer support available by email and what is the response time?
- Is there a toll free number for customer service? Is it always busy?
- Does the vendor's website provide technical support?
- Does the producer support user advisory groups?
- Does the producer sponsor formal update training sessions?
- How are users informed about product changes?
- Does the producer have a process to deal with errors identified by users of the databases?
- Does the producer provide use statistics?
- What kind of use statistics are available from the producer?

Publicity and Promotions

- Will the vendor promote use of the resource?
- Will the vendor supply promotional content for email to interested individuals, faculty newsletters, web pages, student newspapers, fliers?
- What specific media sources can be targeted for effective publicity?

Continuous Assessment

- ⦿ Determine an assessment cycle (quarterly, biannually, yearly)
- ⦿ Is the product still useful?
- ⦿ Has the product changed?
- ⦿ Does the product continue to meet the needs of our users?
- ⦿ Are there any new competing products available which might better meet our users' needs?
- ⦿ Are there use statistics available which can be analyzed to determine use?
- ⦿ Is there continued demand for the product?
- ⦿ Do local instructional and support materials need modification?

What are the Best Practices for Evaluating a New Electronic Resource?

1. Develop an e-resource Collection Development Policy that fits the needs and goals of your institution and integrates electronic resources within the array of other collection formats in your library.
2. “Try before you Buy” – Always get a trial from the e-publisher before agreeing to purchase.
3. Obtain stakeholder involvement before deciding to purchase.
4. Use an “Electronic Resource Evaluation Checklist” to ensure you look at all facets of the particular e-resource.

Conti....

5. Perform a cost benefit-analysis.
6. Benchmark- Before, during and after the acquisition is made.
7. Monitor usage statistics regularly (and especially before renewing a subscription).
8. Develop and implement library workflows, policies, and procedures for evaluating, selecting, and accessing e-resources that are tailored to the goals and needs of your library and promote the use of your collection of e-resources.

Life Cycle of an E-Resource

Seven Phases

1. Discovery- Awareness of a new or existing e-resource originates from an attorney, paralegal, faculty member, student, librarian, or publisher brochure. Awareness may also arise out of some recognized need and then researched in a directory of e-resources, other selection tool, or posed as a question to a listserv to find a fitting e-resource solution.
2. Trial- It is a good practice to always try out an e-resource before deciding to subscribe or purchase. A trial may include additional stakeholders other than just librarians. Nearly all publishers now accommodate trials of their e-resources before deciding to subscribe.

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3. Evaluation- The process of gathering and analyzing information gained from the trial, completing an Electronic Resource Evaluation Checklist, reading/evaluating the license agreement, and performing a cost benefit analysis.
4. Selection- Based on results from the trial, the E-Resource Evaluation Checklist, the cost benefit analysis, and satisfaction with the clauses in the license agreement, a decision is made whether to subscribe or purchase the e-resource. (You may be evaluating competing e-resources in which case you would select the one which best suits your needs and budget.)

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- 5. Acquisition-** The process of informing the publisher that you would like to purchase the database. While negotiation of price and clauses in the license agreement can take place at any point along the life cycle, it is at this point that final negotiation takes place. A publisher is most likely to relent somewhat on price and minor changes to the license agreement when they know that a deal is nearly in hand.
- 6 Access-** This is the phase at which you inform patrons of the availability of the new e-resource, provide points of access for patrons to use it, place information regarding the e-resource in the library's ERM system or homegrown equivalent, and passwords if needed. The points of access you use depend on each library's bibliographic access policies

Reasons for using an E-Resource Evaluation Checklist:

- Ensures that you are making the best selection decision.
- Serves as a guide so that all necessary questions regarding an e-resource get asked and answered.
- Enables and fosters responsibility and aids in budgeting.
- Keeps all the information about an e-resource in one location .

The E-Resource Evaluation Checklist

- E-Resource Evaluation Checklists Generally Focus on Five Areas:
 - Content and authority
 - Usability and design
 - Technical issues, training and support
 - License agreement issues
 - Cost and budgetary considerations
- Ways in which E-Resource Evaluation Checklists are maintained:
 - Electronically (ERMS or other database, PDF form, Word document, Spreadsheet)
 - As paper forms

The E-Resource Evaluation Checklist

Specific Criteria to Include

- Content Appropriateness- originality, uniqueness, authority
- Currency and Archives- also embargos and number of documents or records
- User Interface- ease of use, intuitiveness
- Search Capability- Basic, advanced, Boolean, full-text, sorting search results, etc.
- Browsing Capability- index, table of contents, linking to previous/subsequent sections
- Display Formatting- HTML, PDF, etc.
- Printing & Downloading – PDF, copy and paste
- Clipping and/or e-mail services
- Compatibility with Mobile Devices and Mobile Apps

Cont...

- Copyright for ILL and Course Pack Purposes
- Access- Passwords, IP Recognition, and VPN
- End-User Support- phone support, online support availability
- End-User Training- In person, telephone, online, online tutorials, user guides
- Technical Support- hours of availability
- User Statistics- availability and type provided
- Bill Back Mechanisms- Hourly and/or transactional
- Marc Records Availability
- Deep Linking- Allows for cataloging at the title level
- Cost and Type of Subscription: Annual Subscription, Perpetual Access, Digital Ownership, etc.

Conclusion

- Evaluation of e-resources is paramount and require meticulous planning by carefully going through the evaluation criteria and peer discussion for the maximum benefits and keep out of problems in future. The library authority should pay proper attention to all the aspects especially licensing agreement and copyright issues.

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